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PROJECT TO STUDY THE DACCA STANDARD AND CALCUTTA STANDARD DIALECTS OF BENGALI AND TO PRODUCE PRELIMINARY TEACHING MATERIALS FOR THE DACCA DIALECT, PHASE II. FINAL REPORT.

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THIS FINAL REPORT PROVIDES A BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DIALECTAL PROBLEMS INVOLVED IN THE PREPARATION OF "INTRODUCTION TO THE DACCA DIALECT OF BENGAL." (SEE ED 012 047.) THE AUTHOR PRESENTS HIS JUSTIFICATION FOR BASING THESE TEACHING MATERIALS ON A MODIFIED FORM OF BENGALI AS SPOKEN IN EAST PAKISTAN, WHICH IS DISTINGUISHED FROM STANDARD COLLOQUIAL BENGALI. (AMM)

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FINAL REPORT

PROJECT TO STUDY THE DACCA STANDARD AND CALCUTTA STANDARD DIALECTS OF BENGALI AND TO PRODUCE PRELIMINARY TEACHING MATERIALS FOR THE DACCA DIALECT, PHASE II.

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Background: Due to the increasing demand on the part of students, Peace Corps volunteers, and others who find themselves concerned with East Pakistan rather than West Bengal, we have deemed it important to develop and produce materials for one of the most important dialects of the East Bengali region, namely the Dacca dialect. Previously there had been attempts both at Chicago and, under Peace Corps auspices, elsewhere, to produce such materials. Because of the necessary haste involved, these materials were for the most part no more than impressionistic, and used as their structural basis An Introduction to Bengali, Part I prepared at this University. The inconsistencies in these materials soon made evident the fact that the dialect differences between Dacca and the Standard Calcutta Colloquial required more careful study than at first seemed necessary. As a result, we have undertaken first to make systematic phonological and grammatical studies of the distinctions between Calcutta and Dacca speech, and on the basis of these studies we have begun to develop teaching materials. While these materials will in general follow the pattern of An Introduction to Bengali, Part I, the phonological section at the beginning, the types of basic sentences, and the grammatical explanations will be quite different. Whereas previously materials for East Bengali merely substituted obviously Muslim lexicon for obviously Hindi lexicon, the materials produced under this project,

Phase II, will be a more independent and separately developed set of materials, based upon new data.

Although this will be detailed under Results below, it might be well to mention at this point that both to give the student some idea of the problems he will face in terms of dialects in East Pakistan, and in order to attempt to define for him a norm in East Bengali speech, we have thought it wise to enter into studies of other dialects than Dacca. Thus, we have worked on Chit'agong Bengali, and are working upon the speech of Khulna, and, while it is not a dialect of Bengali, Assamese. The reason for the latter is that Assamese presents certain types of problems which are also present in scme dialects of East Bengali.

Objectives:

1. To prepare a set of materials which will allow students, Peace Corps volunteers, and others, to become familiar with the peculiarities of the Dacca dialect of Bengali before going to the field.

2. To attempt to ascertain for purposes of future research, distinctions between the Standard Colloquial (West) Bengali and the dialects of the East.

3. To determine, in the interests of description of the Bengali language as it exists at this point in time, the breadth of phonological and grammatical variation within

the language. The importance of this is recognized by the fact that the government of Pakistan has included funds for a full scale dialect study in its Third Five Year Plan.

Results:

On the whole, the purpose of the project has been accomplished. Fifteen lessons of teaching material for the Dacca Dialect of Bengali have been prepared and the tapes to accompany these. These lessons are based upon the methodology used in the Introduction to Bengali, Part I (East- West Center Press, 1965), with necessary changes not only of language but of cultural concepts. The grammatical sections of each lesson unit have of course been radically changed, as has the introductory section on phonology.

The difficulties in doing the research for the text have been two. The first is that half-way through the project Muzaffer Ahmad, who had been doing most of the direct work, became dissatisfied because his speech did not approximate sufficiently the dialect forms which we were trying to get at. Mr. Ahmad is a highly educated man, and for this reason and because he had been living away from Dacca for some years, his speech came too close to reproducing the Standard Colloquial Bengali upon which the Introduction to Bengali, Part I is based. As a result, all the work had to be recast, attempting to come closer to the type of language which visitors to East Pakistan would be apt to encounter in the major cities.

Corollary to this problem is the fact that apart from Standard Colloguial Bengali, the language as spoken in East Pakistan consists of a series of often divergent dialects. Our choice of Dacca was based on the idea that of all the dialects this is perhaps the most widely used; we realized however that a person learning this style of language would not be to go to, let us say, Sylhet and be immediately understood. Therefore, the language presented int this text is from the beginning an artificial language; it is recognized that any or all forms can be questioned. Our problem was to hit upon a ccmpromise which came closest to satisfying all of the speakers of East Pakistan Bengali who worked on the project. In considering these matters, the studies of Chittagong dialect and Assamese prepared by Punya Sloka Ray were valuable, as were the tapes of Khulna and other speeches transcribed by Miss Jahan.

The second problem was one of personnel. Punya Sloka Ray, who started out the work on the project, went to India for a research trip in 1965. He expected to return to Chicago, and our plans were also based on that expectation. He was however offered such a good position in India that he decided to stay. That part of the work which was not actually written out was therefore lost to us; this was a considerable set-back in terms of time. There were other personnel changes. Mrs. Manisha Dasgupta, who had been working on Assamese, returned to India, and in the autumn of 1965, Muzaffer Ahmad, who had been carrying a large share of the burden, returned to Pakistan. In both of these cases, files were left, but in some instances there was

lack of clarity as to what the files meant; this constituted another setback. Therefore, we have not been able to include in the Dacca Dialect text as extensive and systematic a grammatical statement as we had intended. The grammar sections of each lesson are adequate, but we had intended a fairly complete contrastive study of the Dacca Dialect vis-a-vis Standard Bengali. Its lack does not mar the teaching effectiveness of the book; it does make the overall result less satisfying from the point of view of the linguistic analyst.

We were fortunate that Miss Roushan Jahan was able to continue work right up until her departure for Pakistan in October of 1966, and that she was assisted in the last few months of the project by Mr. Shamsul Bari, also from Dacca. Together they did an excellent job of the last minute revisions which are always necessary.